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the divine one ; it is the one which makes the Bible appeal to us. As the account of God's approach to men in manifold ways, we turn to the Bible with just and high expectation of helpfulness and inspiration for our life-tasks. Abbott frequently points the way to such benefit, and the reader will easily add to the list of practical lessons gained.

The division of the work is according to the kinds of literature contained in the Old Testament. The legislation is divided chronologically; there is admirable treatment of the fiction, of the Song of Songs (with translation), of Job, "a spiritual tragedy," of the wisdom literature as an ethical philosophy, and of the preachers of righteousness and redemption, the prophets.

Who is God ? What is man ? What is their right relationship ? How can it be secured ? These questions the Bible answers, and the author has had them constantly before him as he has written.

OWEN H. GATES.

DORSET, Vt.

A HISTORY OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA. By ROBERT WILLIAM ROGERS. 2 vols. New York : Eaton & Mains, 1900. Pp. xx+429; xv+418. \$5.

To PROFESSOR ROGERS belongs the distinction of having been the first to present us with a comprehensive history of Babylonia and Assyria in an English garb. The two handsome and portly volumes represent the fruit of the active labors of a decade, and it may be said at once that Professor Rogers has produced an eminently readable book, which is certainly one of the first qualifications that ought to distinguish a history. He wields a facile pen ; his style is graceful, his English vigorous, and he well knows how to carry his readers along with him as he unfolds the interesting tale of Babylonia's and Assyria's rise to greatness and subsequent decline. The story is a long one, extending over several millenniums, but under Rogers' guidance it is never a tedious tale, and, even when discussing details that might easily become irksome to the general reader, he succeeds in investing them with deep interest. Combining with a thorough knowledge of details, so far as they are known to us, a sympathetic spirit that enables him to penetrate into the meaning of his vast array of facts, he has made a valuable contribution that insures for him an honorable place among modern historians as well as among Assyriologists. Professor Rogers has given us even more in his two volumes than the title-page would indicate. He has devoted the first 253 pages to a full account of the

first attempts at deciphering the Assyrian inscriptions and to an exhaustive narrative of explorations in both Babylonia and Assyria. Hitherto the only popular account of decipherment and of explorations accessible to English readers was to be found in Evetts' *New Light on the Holy Land* (London, 1891), but this was far from being complete. Rogers has gone to the trouble of having reproduced the very inscriptions which Grotfend, the first successful decipherer of cuneiform characters, had before him, and, by means of additional cuts of groups of signs from these inscriptions, makes perfectly clear to the uninitiated the method which Grotfend pursued. Following the progress of the decipherment, he sets forth in an interesting manner how, step by step, the secrets were wrested from the monuments, until a secure basis had been secured. In an "Excursus" he tells the strange story of Flower's copies of some cuneiform characters from Persepolis which will probably be new even to many specialists. Rogers might have added to this part of his work an account of the progress of Assyriological studies from the forties, when the system of decipherment was practically fixed to our days, and perhaps in a future edition he will be disposed to do so, and thus give the general public an idea of the extent and character of the field covered by Assyriology.¹ In his account of explorers of Babylonia, Rogers takes us back to the Hebrew narrative of Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century, and step by step advances to the great series of excavations in the mounds of Assyria and Babylonia which, begun in 1843, have had such remarkable results. He recounts in detail the work done by French, English, American, and German explorers, and his narrative is marked, as is the whole work, by the evident intention of being fair to all and giving to each his due. In chap. 7 he touches upon the much-vexed Sumerian question. So far as the history of this controversy is concerned, there is no objection to be found with Rogers' narrative. But since he does not enter into a consideration of the motives which led Halévy, and at one time Delitzsch, to oppose the current theory of the Sumero-Accadian origin of the Babylonian script and of Babylonian culture, Rogers cannot be said to have made any contribution to the subject. To the impartial student it must be clear that the question has by no means been settled. The current theory raises a number of

¹ In the earlier editions KAULEN'S *Assyrien und Babylonien* covered the ground, but the latest edition (1899) is a thorough disappointment, so that this once valuable work is now "antiquated" through a republication which fails to take into account the work of scholars during the past ten years.

problems for which no satisfactory solution has as yet been offered. On the other hand, Halévy is inclined to underestimate certain difficulties involved in his own theory, and yet it has always seemed to the writer that from the historical point of view the supposition that Babylonian culture is distinctly Semitic, even in the earliest period of which we have any knowledge, is the one least difficult to maintain. This, of course, is not the place to enter upon a prolonged discussion, but it is well to remind scholars that in questions of science majorities do not count. Certainly, if a specialist in Babylonian culture of so high a standing as Thureau-Dangin is inclined to side with Halévy, that is far more significant than the fact that two dozen Assyriologists who have not paid any special attention to the question stand on the other side. It must be confessed that among Assyriologists there are only three or four who have a right by virtue of their investigation to an opinion on this subject, and it would be well for Rogers in a subsequent edition of his work to call attention to the actual conditions, even at the risk of letting the world know that there are still many unsolved problems of a fundamental character in the domain of Assyriology.

After chapters on the sources, on the geography of Babylonia and Assyria, and on the chronology, Professor Rogers advances in Book II to the history proper. It may be stated that his chronology on the whole is conservative. We do not find here any reckless juggling with high figures in order to impress readers with the great antiquity of Babylonian culture. The author freely confesses the difficulties encountered in the early chronology, and his exposition in this respect presents fairly our present imperfect knowledge. The only serious criticism that we would offer in the account of the early dynasties is the manner in which he portrays the supposed conflict between the Semites and non-Semites for the control of the Euphrates valley. Since it is admitted that even the oldest inscriptions are either directly Semitic, or at least contain Semitic words and Semitic phrases, it is certainly hazardous to draw important conclusions from an exceedingly unsound basis. Let the historians for the present content themselves, so far as possible, with statements of the data, and leave the interpretation and reconstruction of the ancient periods of Babylonian history until more material has been found, and the ethnological and archæological problems connected with the origin of Babylonian culture are in a more advanced state than at present. With the period of Hammurabi (about 2300 B. C.) we reach an era of far greater certainty. Professor

Rogers' narrative from this period on and right through the various epochs of Babylonian and Assyrian history is most satisfactory. He has made a most careful study, not only of the texts, but of the studies upon the texts, produced by various scholars during the past thirty years. No monograph or article of any moment has escaped him, and one feels that he has carefully weighed the *pros* and *cons* in mooted points, and, as a general thing, has adopted the sounder view. He is not led away by scholarly conjectures, however brilliant, and, while this sobriety sometimes makes his narrative prosaic, the gain, on the other hand, is very great. Rogers may be implicitly followed as a guide by those who, without direct knowledge of the sources, wish to ascertain exactly what we know of Babylonian and Assyrian history. It may perhaps be objected here that he at times introduces details drawn from the inscriptions which do not appear to be of any importance, and yet it is better to err on this side than on the other, so that the "lay" reader may have as much material as possible before him. On the whole, therefore, Rogers' method in giving as full a compilation as possible, and holding back decisions on questions still in dispute, is to be commended. The highest praise that can be awarded to the author is to express the opinion that his work is a worthy successor of Tiele's history published in 1886, and which, but for the fact that during the last fourteen years the material has so largely increased, would still be a standard work on the subject. Tiele showed in his work how Babylonian and Assyrian history is to be written, and if his example had been more generally followed by those who entered upon this field, we should probably have by this time more certainty and less conjecture. Rogers is to be congratulated upon having produced a history which is a commendable reversion to a sounder method.

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STILISTIK, RHETORIK, POETIK, in Bezug auf die biblische Litteratur komparativisch dargestellt von ED. KÖNIG. Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung (Theodor Weicher), 1900. Pp. vi+420. M. 12.

MODERN study of Hebrew concerned itself for a long time chiefly with etymology. The language lacking classical syntax, it seemed possible to ignore with impunity all questions of formal syntax. More recently monographs upon special parts of syntax have appeared, and